

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

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Tuesday, January 1. 1706.

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## INTRODUCTION.

I know long Digressions have been the Great Error of this Work, from which some People complain I never return again; such People cannot yet determine I never shall: A time may come when I may pick up the Fragments of Discourse, and draw every Point to a Head; and I promise to do this with as much Order and Speed as I can.

Innumerable new Occasions draw me off from my first Design, and sometimes I change my Title, sometimes my Design; but all attend the Change of Scenes on the Stage of things, which I think may be a just Apology for the various Turnings of my Pen from or to this or that Subject, which I promise my self will pass for a sufficient Apology.

I began the last Volume with the Subject of Trade, and pursued it with some Success to N° 19. when the Breaches and Divisions unhappily carried on by the Violence of Parties, and the Ferment of the whole Nation upon the Subject of Tacking, and Choosing, Voting and making Interest, alarm'd me to talk

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talk of the present Matter. Will any blame me, that looks back on the busy Scene in *May* and *June* last past? Had I gone on with the Subject of Trade, no Man had had time to have read it; their Thoughts were entirely taken up and intent upon Elections, Party-Quarrels; and continual Feuds embarrass'd and embroil'd the People; and to talk of Trade, Manufactures and Improvements, had been to say nothing to the purpose; it had been as Musick to him that had no Ear, or Hebrew to him that had no Learning.

Now, blessed be God, the War at Home is a little over, the Cause is removed, and the Effect ceases; I talk'd for Peace, and it is obtain'd; and as I never shall, I hope, be fond of saying nothing to the purpose, I quit the Subject, as no longer needful, and return to that of Trade, where I left off.

I confess I cannot but observe, and some think I am too often repeating the Storms of Rage and Party-Malice I have brought upon my self, in the Prosecution of this Peace; but I am not the first that has been stoned for saying the Truth: I cannot but Think, that as Time and the Conviction of their Senses, will restore Men to Love the Peace now established in this Nation; so they will gradually see I have acted no Part, but that of a Lover of my Country, and an honest Man; and so in time it may wear off: And though it be hard to be thus treated, yet I cannot but support my self with the continual Satisfaction, of having contributed my Mite to the Publick Peace.

I am now lanching into the boundless Ocean of Publick Negoce, the great Article of this Nation's Wealth, the Fountain of its Wealth, and by Consequence of its Power; I shall in this Introductory Paper lay down a General Scheme of my Design in it, and, if possible, pursue it.

First, I purpose to give you a short Abridgment of what I have already said on the Head of Trade, and proceed to explain my self on the particular Subject of Trade, as it respects *England* in particular; together with the several Decays and Improvements that my Observations make me capable of.

I shall not however so confine my self to the Subject of Trade; but, as occasion presents, I may continue just Observations upon the Publick Matters, especially as they respect the Affairs of War; and perhaps may get so far forward in the Matters of Trade, by the opening of our next Campaign, as may give leisure to the Readers to divert themselves with such needful Remarks on the Publick Actions as occasion presents.

To this purpose, as in my first Design, I laid down a Scheme of innocent and useful Diversion, tho' it after encrased upon me to a Magnitude, I could not foresee, and had not in my Design; so I purpose certain *Miscellanea* at the End' of this Paper, as a just Alleivation to the tedious Vein of othet Matter, and as a Handle to introduce any thing useful and advantagious either to the Reader or my self.

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I shall take care that this shall hand nothing to the World improper or impertinent ; nor shall it be so considerable, as to cut off or cut short the Thread of the other Discourse, and so make the Pleasant thrust out the Profitable ; wherefore if any People shall furnish Matter for such a part, that shall be Trifling or Personal, they must not take it ill, if they are answered by an entire Neglect ; any thing extraordinary, any thing Curious, Philosophical, Natural or Accidental, shall be entertain'd and improv'd, but no farther than it may be both profitable, as well as pleasant and suitable to the Design of the Undertaking.

In this Discourse of Trade, I shall in particular Undeceive the World, as to the Subject Matter of a long Journey, I took last Summer into the West and Northern Parts of this Nation ; it shall no longer remain a Mystery, why I Travail'd so far. The Gentlemen of *Devonshire* shall Blush, when they tell me, I came there to Disperse Pamphlets, and make Factions ; and our Beloved Friends at *Manchester*, who fancy'd me going into *Scotland* to Head a Party, will be ashame'd of themselnes ; all those North Countrymen of Courage, who being very Civil to me when I was there, Bully'd me when I was gone ; will find they were mistaken in their Man, and insulted him without Cause.

The Improvement of an Expensive Journey, the Advantages, the Observations, will here be all Publish'd, for the Instruction and Information of those very Enemies, who so much Envy'd seeing the Author out of Gaol ; and he Labours to requite their Malice, by doing them Good.

It will here appear, he did not Travail to form Parties, spie into Persons, or Concern himself in Publick Affairs ; the Enquiries and Examinations he has made into the State and Posture, the Declining or Encrease, the Improvements or Mistakes of Trade, not Parties. He has seen and observ'd the State of our Manufactures, and of our Manufacturers also ; the Circulations, Obstructions, Changings and Settlements of our Trade ; the Interest of the Respective Countries, their Clashing with Dependence upon, or Assistance to one another in Matters of Trade ; and as all the Errors in the General Conduct of Trade, which he has observ'd, shall come to be Describ'd ; he doubts not to give profitable Essays, at such Regulations, Amendments, and Alterations, as may be useful to the Respective Parties Concern'd.

Perhaps he may give some Needful Hints here, at the State of our Poor ; and if he differs from some, who in their Greater Judgments propose Methods for the Poor, he is Sorry ; but must be plain, he is no Enemy to Charity-Hospitals, and Work-Houses ; but he cannot but think, that Methods to keep our Poor OUT OF THEM, far exceed, both in Prudence and Charity, all the Settlements and Endeavours in the World, to Maintain them IN THEM.

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He resolves, Providence and Circumstances permitting, to pursue our Declining Negoce, through all its Mazes of Bewildred Accidents; perhaps Credit, Exchanges, Money, Stocks, Companies, Banks, and all the rest of the Present Foundations of our Trade, may be Trac'd to the Center; and some of their yet unseen Errors, Calmly Debated. Foreign Correspondence, and Home Manufactures in their Turn, will come to be Treated of; and if any thing to the purpose can be offer'd, the End will be effectually answer'd; and he hopes the Author and his Undertaking no longer Voted useless.

He promises Thankfully to accept, all the Helps, Information, and useful Hints, any Man of Judgment will afford him, as particular Subjects come before him; he readily owns himself as Deficient in many Cases, as willing and capable of Instruction; and he shall always faithfully distinguish such Helpers, and do them Justice in his Relation of their Opinions.

As for People who Cavil at Demonstrations, and will not be convinc'd by Reason; he desires such to Expect but small regard to be given to their Objections. In doubtful Cases he will give his Opinion; others that differ, may make their Thoughts as Publick if they please: But 'tis hop'd they will not expect this Paper should be a Dissertation of Trade; to Dispute with Men, whose Opinions are sway'd by their Interests, rather than their Judgment, is so endless a Work, that 'tis hop'd no Man will expect so Fruitless a Task should be undertaken here.

As to Censure, he expects it; he Writes to serve the World, not to please them. A few Wise, Calm, Impartial, Disinterested Men, he always had the Good hap, to both Please and Satisfie; by their Judgment he desires still to be determin'd; and if he has any Pride, it is, That he is approv'd by such; to the rest he sedately says, Their Censure deserves no Notice.

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